

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 FMC-02

INR-07 NSAE-00 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06 LAB-04

SIL-01 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /065 W

----- 115017

R 031205Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4908

USDOC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

NHMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 7044

AMEMBASSY MANAMWE

UNCLAS DHAHRAN 0983

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, BGEN, EGEN, SA

SUBJECT: DAMMAM PORT SITREP -- AUGUST 1, 1976

REF: DHAHRAN 0870, USMTM MSG P R 2206572Z JUL 76, DHAHRAN A-15

1. SUMMARY: ON BALANCE, PORT OF DAMMAM CONTINUES TO SHOW MINOR IMPROVEMENT AS PORT OPERATIONS VERY LOWLY BECOME MORE EFFICIENT AND MORE RO-RO VESSELS START SERVICE TO THE PORT. LABOR SHORTAGES CONTINUE TO BRAKE EFFORTS TO CURTAIL PORT CONGESTION BUT THOSE IN CONTROL OF PORT CONTINUE TO PRESS ALONG OTHER FRONTS TO MAKE OPERATIONS MORE EFFICIENT.

2. AS OF JULY 31, DAMMAM PORT HAD 152 VESSELS REGISTEDED TO BERTH, SAME NUMBER AS AT BEGINNING OF MONTH. CARGO ABOARD SHIPS AWAITING BERTHING SPACE ESTIMATED AT 874,000 TONS, A SEVEN PERCENT INCREASE OVER BEGINNING OF MONTH. GENERAL CARGO SHIPS WAITING BERTH CAN NOW ANTICIPATE 75-80 DAY BERTHENG DELAY, A MODEST IMPROVEMENT OVER
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SITUATION REPORTED IN OR REFTTEL IN EARLY JULY.

3. DAILY GENERAL CARGO DISCHARGES RATES RANGE AROUND 12,000 TON MARK ON TYPICAL CAY (VS JUST UNDER 10,000 TONS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR) BUT DAILY RATES CAN SURGE SWIFTLY UPWARDS AS RO-RO SHIPS DISCHARGE SEVERAL THOUSAND TONS IN FEW HOURS. DURING WEEK ENDING JULY 24, TO ILLUSTRATE, AVERAGE DAILY DISCHARGE RATE WAS 11,999 TONS WHILE WEEK ENDING JULY 31 DAILY RATE LEAPED TO 14,249 TONS FOLLOWING VISITS BY PACIFIC FAR EAST LINES AND STATES LINES (FIRST-TIME CALL) RO-RO SHIPS WHICH DISCHARGED 13,000 TONS OF CARGO.

4. REVAMPED DAMMAM BARGE PORT CONTINUES TO MAKE INCREASING CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS EASING PORT CONGESTION PROBLEM, BUT NOT AS SWIFTLY AS HOPED. LIKE REST OF PORTFTN IT TOOJQLAGUED WITH LABOR SHORTAGES. STILL, WITH DISCHARGE RAT RANGING AROUND 1800 TONS DAILSUN IT IS A HELP. AS OF AUGUST 1 THERE WERE 86 LASH BARGES (ALL BELONGING TO US SHIPPING LINES) AWAITING DISCHARGE. THREE DATE FROM JUNE 16 AND NINE DATE FROM JUNE 19 ARRIVALS OF MOTHER SHIPS AND EARLIEST AMONG REMAINING 74 DATE BACK TO JULY 6.

5. ARAMCO'S NEW BARGE PORTS JUST STARTING TO CONTRIBUTE TO EASING OF DAMMAM'S CONGESTION PORBLEM. LAST WEEK OF JULY TWO ARAMCO PORTS (THIRD PORT WILL RECEIVE LASH BARGES SOMETIME LAST HALF AUGUST) HANDLED 6,791 TONS OF CARGO -- CARGO THAT ORDINARILY WOULD HAVE HAD TO PASS THROUGH DAMMAM PORT.

6. OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREEZ DURING JULY:

(A) EARLY JULY DAMMAM PORT UNDERWENT MAJOR RESHUFFLE OF TOP MANAGEMENT AND LONG-TIME PORT MANAGER WAS REMOVED. INCIDENT SHOWS, ALONG WITH OTHERS, THAT SAG SERIOUS ABOUT UPGRADING OVERALL MANAGEMENT OF PORT.

(B) PORT AUCTIONS WERE SUDDENLY SUSPENDEED MIDDLE OF MONTH. AUCTIONS HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE WEAPON TO PUSH IMPORTERS TO REMOVE THEIR SHIPMENTS ASAP AFTER ARRIVEL AND REDUCE CONGESTION INSIDE PORT MARSHALLING YARDS. SUSPENSION OF AUCTIONS, WE UNDERSTAND, OCCURRED BECAUSE TOO MANY IMPORTANT MERCHANTS WERE BEING BRUISED BY SYSTEM WHICH FORCES IMPORTER TO PROVIDE HIS OWN WAREHOUSING RATHER THAN LET HIS MERCHANDISE STACK UP IN PORT AREA. SUDDENLY (SO SUDDENLY IT CAUGHT SOME SENIOR PORT MANAGERS UNAWARES) AUCTIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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WERE RESUMED AUGUST 1. ASSUMPTION IS THAT HIGHER SAG AUTHORITIES RECOGNIZE NEED FOR ACTUION PROGRAM AK IGRUSHED ASIDE LOCAL UNHAPPINESS.

(C) ONE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO DAMMAM PORT CONGESTION HAS BEEN PLAN TO ASSIGN BERTH OR BERTHS TO INDIVIDUAL COMPANY TO WORK ON CONTRACT BASIS RATHER THAN CONTINUE WITH PRESENT SYSTEM WHICH

REQUIRES STEVEDORING COMPANY TO WORK SHIPS OF CERTAIN LINES.
ARGUMENT FAVORING "BY THE BERTH" SYSTEM IS THAT PRODUCTION
TRAGETS CAN BE SET AND MORE EASILY HELD TO (SEE REFAIR). EFFECTIVE
SEPT 1 BRITISH COMPANY IS BEING GIVEN ONE BERTH TO WORK AND RESULTS
OF THEIR EFFORT WILL DEMONSTRATE ADVANTAGE OF SYSTEM. AT SAME TIME
KOREAN"ALGOSAIBI/KANOO
JOINT VENTURE IS MOBILIZING TO ASSUME COMMAND OF GROUP OF DAMMAM
BERTHS BUT, WE UNDERSTAND, NEW COMPANY IS HAVING DIFFICULTY OB-
TAINING SAUDI VISAS FOR THE KOREAN EMPLOYEES.

(D) CEMENT CONTINUES TO ACCOUNT FOR LARGE SHARE OF CARGO BACKLOG.
ARAMCO IS INTRODUCING NEW CONCEPT TO SPEED CEMENT DISCHARGE RATE.
SPANISH CEMENT COMPANY IS BAGGING ITS PRODUCT IN SPECIAL BAGS
CAPABLE OF CONTANING 1 1/4 TONS OF CEMENT WHICH CQJN BE DISCHARGED
WITH AID OF TWO LARGE FORKLIFTS. ARAMCO TRANSPORTATION PEOPLE ARE
BOTH EXCITED AND NERVOUS OVER POTENTIALS OF NEW SYSTEM. THEY
WONDER WHO "HOLDS BAG- IF CEMENT BA BURSTS AS IT IS PUT ASHORE.

7. FYI: MORE DETAILS ON DAMMAM PORT SITUATION ARE PROVIDED IN
EXCELLENT DOD MESSAGE REFERENCED ABOVE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PORT CONGESTION, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DHAHRA00983
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760298-1133
From: DHAHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760893/aaaaddyz.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 DHAHRAN 870, 76 DHAHRAN A-15
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <07 DEC 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DAMMAM PORT SITREP -- AUGUST 1, 1976
TAGS: EWWT, BGEN, EGEN, SA
To: STATE
COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006